

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: February 16, 2003

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**GOV. EASLEY WARNS MOTORISTS TO STAY OFF THE ROAD
MOST SEVERE WEATHER STILL TO COME**

RALEIGH - Gov. Mike Easley today warned motorists to stay off the road during the current weather storm. The State Highway Patrol has already responded to nearly 1,000 accidents since the start of the storm. This is well above average for a Sunday. No fatalities have been reported at this time.

"The worst weather from this storm has yet to come," said Easley. "We are expecting additional ice and freezing rain which will cause road conditions to worsen. People should avoid traveling if at all possible. This is the time to put safety first."

Easley also reminded residents to call 911 centers or State Highway Patrol Offices only in the event of an emergency.

"Our 911 and State Highway Patrol command centers are being overloaded with calls about road conditions," said Easley. "We must keep these lines open so that people who truly need assistance can get through."

People who need information on road conditions should check www.ncsmartlink.org or they can call 1-877-DOT-4YOU (1-877-368-4968)

According to the National Weather Service, a shallow layer of below-freezing air has descended upon the Piedmont and the eastern slope of the Mountains in North Carolina. Some freezing rain has occurred already, but significant additional amounts are expected as rain and rain showers moves from the south and southwest over running the established cold air. Ice accumulation could approach ½ inch on some surfaces, and winds between 15 to 20 mph will present additional problems. Precipitation is expected to end overnight. Power outages are expected to occur.

Countywide power outages have been reported in Ashe and Watauga Counties because of problems at the Horseshoe Gap substation. Most power has been restored. Work is ongoing, and complete restoration is expected later this afternoon. Duke Power and Progress Energy report several thousand crews are deployed and ready to respond to outages as they occur.